

*The Scottish American*, published in New York, under the *nom de plume* of 'Andrew McSpurtle.'"

No tribe of American Indians is more typical, none more interesting, than these Iroquois of the famous Six Nations. For nearly three centuries they have been in contact with white men, and yet almost or quite ten thousand remain, speaking their old languages, thinking their ancient thought, living more or less of the old life. Some have asked whether it is likely that suitable candidates for future awards of the medal may be expected. There are already in the mind of those interested in the award more worthy claimants for recognition than can be supplied during twenty years.

### MEDIUMS OUTDONE BY THE CITIZENS OF FORT WORTH.

Under glaring headlines "Ghosts and Spirits Routed by Athenians," the *Fort Worth* (Texas) *Record* of January 29, gives an account of an exposé of spiritualistic fraud given in that city by an energetic association called the Athenian Society. Using as a basis Mr. David P. Abbott's book, *Behind the Scenes with the Mediums*, the Athenians under the leadership of Rabbi Joseph Jasin gave a public exposition illustrating different varieties of famous spiritualistic frauds in which well-known citizens acted the part of mediums. The *Record* describes the event as follows:

"Attacking front and rear, as well as executing a scientific flank movement or two, the Athenians utterly routed all the assembled ghosts, hobgoblins and "psychic phenomena" artists at the city hall last night and provided one of the most interesting and instructive entertainments for the great crowd assembled that has been given in Fort Worth for ages. The hall was literally packed to overflowing with seekers after truth, standing room being at a premium in both hall and gallery.

"Rabbi Joseph Jasin acted as spokesman, lecturer and conjurer-in-chief and conducted the entire affair throughout with a quaint, humorous and entertaining style all his own. His opening address dwelt with the purposes of the meeting, stating that it was not all in ghosts and the like, but a serious subject; that his associates and himself had for years made a close study of psychic phenomena and had been greatly interested in the recent appearance here of Ruth Grey and Dr. Tyndall, as well as Anna Eva Fay. The apparent impossibilities performed by those remarkable people had whetted the desire of the Athenians to show the people what the apparent mystical performances really were and the meeting was the result of this desire. He stated that in the olden days people who pulled off such apparent miracles would have been burned for witches, but this age is skeptical. And contrawise, no other people in history were more completely gullible and superstitious than our own, as witness the manner in which they allowed themselves to be fooled only a short time ago."

The paper next proceeds to enumerate the different tests, and the explanation of each mystery as it was afterwards made clear to the audience: spirit-writing, vest-turning, rope-tying, table-moving, and readings of sealed writings, while the star exhibition was the billet test to which Rabbi Jasin thus refers in a personal letter:

"Just one week ago to-night the Athenian Society gave a public exposé of 'psychic phenomena,' illustrating about 10 or 12 different varieties of famous

frauds. We had a very clever and accomplished lady for our mind-reader, and she surpassed Ruth Grey. Our telephone was of a special design, the receiver being concealed in the lady's waist, with a flexible speaking-tube attached to it which really increased the volume of sound and also made it easy to conceal the mechanism while tying on the blindfold. Our tablets were made up of separate sheets held together by brass brads which made it easy to take out any sheet and replace it again without leaving any suspicious clew. At the speaking end was a telegraph clicker attachment which gave a signal of distress by lifting one of the lady's heels from the nail. The experiment was successful beyond our wildest hopes, as evidenced by the general praise of all impartial observers, and the unrestrained wrath of the spiritualists, though we had made no direct mention of or attack upon the latter; but they instinctively felt that their cause had been much damaged in this community. The newspapers were loud in their praises of the enterprise, and the astonishment at the revelations we made was universal. Altogether we had great success, but the comments of some of the innocent dupes have convinced me that these frauds are not only simple impositions upon popular credulity, but they are positively harmful from a psychological point of view and ought to be fought by all honest men who are in a position to show them up.

"The next Sunday the local spiritualists, after challenging me through the press to perform some of my miracles under test conditions such as are 'always demanded by hard-shell spiritualists,' had two of their missionaries from New York here for a public lecture and demonstration of spirit return which was advertised as an answer to the Athenians. Our exposé helped to attract a big crowd which turned into the most disappointed and disgusted lot of people I have ever seen. Out of fear of us—I believe—they abandoned their slate messages and confined themselves to verbal blue book tests and a lot of general bluffing of a very crude variety. Both of the Reverend Doctors are extremely illiterate, and even the believers felt ashamed and afterwards many said so. The proceedings are hardly worth describing. At the conclusion, the Rev. Mrs. N. announced that her husband was a magnetic healer and she an expert shampooer and manicuriste, and would be glad, etc."

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#### A LETTER FROM MR. PEIRCE.

*To the Editor of The Open Court:*

I wish to express to you my full conviction that your article on modern theology in the April *Open Court* is really great.

Your proposition that there is on the one hand a Jesus legend which is to be valued on the same principles as any other legend, but that Christianity on the whole is not that, nor to any considerable degree a development from that, but that it is a gradual common-sense evolution from a Christ-idea, seems to me to be a very great and vital truth, which I am all the readier to accept because it satisfies my internal conviction of the truth and dignity of Christianity. It at once raises our special religion to a sovereign position,—by basing it in that development of Human Reason to which all truth must be referred.

It seems to me to be a magnificent and truly great idea, to which I give in my adhesion for what little value it may have.

CHARLES S. PEIRCE.